

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1414

By Walley

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate John Ross upon being named the 2021 Tennessee Tree Farmer of the Year.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take pleasure in recognizing those industrious Tennesseans who excel in their fields of endeavor and bring pride and prosperity to this State; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is John Ross of Savannah, who was recently named the 2021 Tree Farmer of the Year by the Tennessee Forestry Association, an honor most befitting his dedication to maintaining the integrity of the property and forest under his charge; and

WHEREAS, the Ross family owns and manages a 7,500-acre tree farm in Hardin County on land acquired by John Ross's great-grandfather, Isaac Walker Ross, in 1881; and

WHEREAS, since that time, the Ross family has made a priority of keeping their beautiful and productive acres in the family through a family partnership that John Ross shares with his two daughters, Christina and Elizabeth—the Ross Forests Partnership, which was enrolled in the Tennessee Tree Farm program in 1977 and is Tree Farm #1359; and

WHEREAS, currently, the Ross family actively manages 5,500 acres of pine plantation and 2,000 acres of mixed natural hardwood stands and wildlife openings; through collaboration with the forestry division of Packaging Corporation of America and American Forest Management, Inc., pine stands have been harvested and hardwood stands have been managed with streamside management zones and other best management practices in place; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ross strives to maximize the long-term growth and quality of his timber as well as conserve the flora and fauna located on his property; approximately 400 acres of

former agricultural land have been planted in pine, hardwood, and wildlife shrubs under the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Program; and

WHEREAS, the Ross family's conservation efforts also include enrolling in the Wetlands Reserve Program for the approximately fifty acres of wetland created by two large creeks that traverse their property, waterways that also serve as teaching ground for water quality and aquatic biodiversity during teacher conservation workshops, landowner programs, and visits by wildlife enthusiasts; and

WHEREAS, as the tree farm is also home to rare and threatened plants and wildlife, including the northern pine snake, John Ross partners with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation as well as the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to ensure proper care and management; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ross generously opens the tree farm for local recreation opportunities, including biking, hiking, boating, fishing, and hunting, and he endeavors to ensure that communication between conservation and industry groups is a priority and helps to identify common interests and goals; and

WHEREAS, a trusted leader among his peers, John Ross has served as a state trustee for the Nature Conservancy and is an active member of the Tennessee Forestry Association; as one of the standout forest landowners in Tennessee and the Southeast region, he mentors others in his profession and promotes outreach and education; and

WHEREAS, this family-owned and -operated tree farm is a prime example of successful, sustainable forest management; John Ross works alongside his daughters and his wife, Harriet, to ensure that the land will continue to be productive and healthy for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, John Ross has worked tirelessly throughout his life to promote responsible, sustainable forestry on his own property and properties across Tennessee, and he is most worthy of recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we commend and congratulate John Ross upon being named the 2021 Tree Farmer of the Year by the Tennessee Forestry Association, extending our best wishes for much continued success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.